A certain businessman who was well known for cruelty and ruthlessness once told Mark Twain about a goal he wanted to accomplish before he died. He said, “Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the 10 Commandments aloud at the top.” Mark Twain said in return, “I have a better idea, you could stay in Boston and keep them.”

Many people in this world, intentionally or unintentionally, live by the saying, “Go big or go home.” Like the businessman, this is also applied to spiritual things. Maybe the businessman wanted to make up for many of his failings by doing this, or maybe he just wanted to do something people would see as spiritually iconic. Whatever the reason, all of this points to the fact that people tend to think the “big” things make them more spiritual. We plan extensive mission trips, conduct major spiritual events, and spend weeks at a time for intense spiritual training and growth (i.e. church camp). Don’t get me wrong, every single one of these items is fantastic and needed. They always help renew the spiritual fire within us. The problem is, many people’s spiritual lives are only comprised of these “big things.” There is no filler, no consistency, and no “little things.” As the popular Scripture Hebrews 12:1 states, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Our spiritual life is a race, and it’s an endurance one at that. It is not all about the quick, huge spiritual boosts and world outreach events. The spiritual race is all about consistency and each little step. Little things like Bible reading, prayer, going to worship, and hanging around Christian people are ways we stay on the right path and keep towards the goal in a “little,” yet vital, ways. Even though most bear the mindset, “Go big or go home,” the Bible has the mindset of “Slow and steady wins the race.” Which saying is most like your spiritual life right now? - B. Petrillo

“...the race is not to the swift...” - Eccl. 9:11
“Let Your Balloon Go”

A certain denomination had a strange idea. They were holding a conference and had a large crowd in attendance. They decided to give everyone a helium filled balloon. The people were told to release their balloons at some point during the worship service when they felt particularly joyful and wanted to express the joy in their hearts. So, throughout the service balloons were released and floated up into the sky. However, after all the worship activities were completed, over 1/3 of the crowd were still holding on to their balloons.

Now, there are plenty of negatives that could be pointed out about this very strange idea, but putting those aside, I found it shocking that over 1/3 of the people never let their balloons go. Maybe some of them were still waiting for the right opportunity or maybe they just never felt joyful enough to let it go. Whatever the reason, it seems like many Christians today also fail to “let their balloons go.” In other words, we fail to express the joy of being a Christian.

Being a Christian should give us plenty of reasons to be joyful and to express this. Proverbs 10:28 says, “The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.” The hope that we have as Christians is definitely a cause of joy, but too often we become so focused on wants and desires of this world and we forget about the joy we feel and should be letting out.

People are always looking for true happiness. The hope we have as Christians is a source of genuine joy and happiness. This should be something we are letting out and sharing so people can have the same. As 1 Peter 1:8-9 says, “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” Christians today have not seen Christ and yet we still love and follow Him. As a result we have an inexpressible joy and salvation. This is undoubtedly worth sharing to our lost and spiritually dying world.

Even though we have this joy, let’s not hold on to it. There is so much happiness to share with our world, don’t be caught at the end of time still “holding on to your balloon.” Let’s let our joy out for others to see so they will want to have the same.—Fuel For Thought

“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.”—1 Thessalonians 2:20
“Not So Innocent Amusements” Part II

1. What great man was referred to as a “glutton and a winebibber”? — Matthew 11:19
2. Which prophet condemned selfish pleasure-seekers who say to themselves, “I am, and none else beside me”? — Isaiah 47:8
3. What Hebrew hero was mocked while the Philistines held a wild party in honor of their god Dagon? — Judges 16
4. Who urged Christians not to behave as unbelievers did, “in the vanity of their mind”? — Ephesians 4:17
5. At whose fateful birthday party did a young woman ask for (and get) the head of John the Baptist on a platter? — Matthew 14:1-12

“Just To Brighten Your Day”

Kids On Love & Marriage

- “Be a good kisser. It might make your wife forget that you never take out the trash.” — Erin, age 8
- “Sensitivity don’t hurt.” — Robbie, age 8
- “Don’t say you love somebody and then change your mind. Love isn’t like picking what movie you want to watch.” — Natalie, age 9

“A merry heart doeth good...” — Proverbs 17:22
Remember:

**Battling With Cancer:** Ms. Frances Ponder, Ms. Annette Hebert, Ms. Debbie Stevenson, Bro. Joe Buck Strong, Mr. G.W. Strong, Carli, Priscilla Shoop, Bro. Bruce James’ Brother, Mrs. Pam Halbert, Mrs. Glenda Scruggs, Cecil Jones, Gary Tidwell, Judy Goodson
Sister Denise’s mother, Sister Evelyn
Sister Gayle Spruiell – Dialysis.
Clay Taylor—diagnosed with a Sarcomatoid Carcinoma; Surgery (7/24) was successful, recovering.
Jimmy Wallace—recovering from a recent fractured hip; also has dementia.
Dennis Anderson—has recovered well from recent heart attack & procedure; released to go back to work.
Trystan Sample—born premature, 2lbs 1oz
Mrs. Maysel Lindsey (Kayla’s Grandma)—shattered her knee [9/07], will be in cast from hip down to ankle.

**Loss of Loved Ones:** The families of Mr. Ric Lee & Mr. Alvin Eddie Miller
Also others who are mentioned, in our prayers.

Notes:

**Evening Sermon:** “Broken Circuits: Experiencing A Disconnect”
Visit online at [http://joaquincoc.weebly.com](http://joaquincoc.weebly.com)
We would like to welcome the visitors and we ask that you come back at every opportunity you can. Thank you for worshiping with us.

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